

CLAUDE PERCY.

BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

O'er the wide, blue waste of the starlight sea
How oft shall I gaze in vain?
While some sighing angel whispers to me:
He will never come again!
I have learned the silence of proud despair
From my worshiped one and lost;
But faint is the smile that my pale lips wear,
And my heart is passion-tost.

In his proud earl-father's castle halls
What a vision met my sight,
Where, with statue grace, 'gainst the pictured walls,
He stood in the shaded light!
The marble forms of the gods of old,
That Claude Percy dreamed beside,
Seemed not of purer, more faultless mold—
But his line's ancestral pride

Flung its icy blight on the boy's high heart!
Ah, his deep, dark, long-lashed eye
Flashed a restless light as, with lips apart,
Half-breathless I glided by.
Alas, nor title, nor gold was mine;
And well might my cheek burn red,
When he turned from the song, the mirth and wine,
And sued for my smiles instead.

My heart beat wild when he breathed my name,
For dark was his mother's brow;
But a charmless and lofty lady came,
With air I remember now;
So you never join in the dance? she said,
One so splendid might be gay—
Inclining slightly his haughty head,
Claude Percy turned away.

As well the statues that stood around,
Sublime with motionless grace,
Inspired by the music's stirring sound,
Had suited the dancer's place!
He was so proud—but he loved me well;
He'd have left his titles and lands
In a lowly home, with me to dwell—
But—his blood dyes hearts and hands.

His mother's vow—thrice one dreary night—
In a mist of wild, dark dreams—
I saw his eye with a cold, dim light;
And—and there were crimson streams
Gushing o'er his midnight cloud of curls,
And the lip I had kissed was white,
"And a youth, with beauty like a girl's,
Stood by—and his steel flashed bright.

Forget not the dark deed, thou Heaven above,
Nor how for that fearful prize
His sister Elith, a bride, looks love
In her page's violet eyes!
Ah, though they may writhe a scornful smile,
Is Claude Percy's blood forgiven?
No—no—from the grove where we met erewhile
Unavenged, it cries to Heaven.